

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 20, 2019

Mr. BRADY. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably detained to cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted against this legislation. I would have voted "nay" on roll call No. 217.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 20, 2019

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Madam Speaker, I missed votes Tuesday, May 14, through Friday, May 17. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Roll Call Vote Number 203 (Passage of H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 204 (Passage of H.R. 2379): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 205 (Ordering the Previous Question): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 206 (Passage of H. Res. 377): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 207 (Passage of H.R. 312, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Reservation Reaffirmation Act): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 208 (Passage of H.R. 375): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 209 (Passage of H.R. 1892, the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Technical Corrections Act): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 210 (Passage of H. AMDT. 221 to H.R. 987 offered by Rep. DAVID MCKINLEY): "no"; Roll Call Vote Number 211 (Passage of H. AMDT. 225 to H.R. 987 offered by Rep. JOSH HARDER): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 212 (Passage of H. AMDT. 240 to H.R. 987 offered by Rep. JENNIFER WEXTON): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 213 (Adoption of Motion to Recommit to H.R. 987): "no"; Roll Call Vote Number 214 (Passage of H.R. 987, the Marketing and Outreach Restoration to Empower Health Education Act of 2019 or MORE Health Education Act): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 215 (Approval of the Journal): "yes"; Roll Call Vote Number 216 (Adoption of Motion to Recommit to H.R. 5): "no"; and Roll Call Vote Number 217 (H.R. 5, the Equality Act): "yes".

MASHPEE WAMPANOAG TRIBE
RESERVATION REAFFIRMATION
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following article from The Washington Post regarding consideration of H.R. 312.

[From the Washington Post, May 13, 2019]

A RIDDLE IN NEW ENGLAND: A CASINO, 321 ACRES OF INDIAN TRIBAL LAND AND A PRESIDENTIAL TWEET

(By Marc Fisher)

Between a boast about bringing jobs to Ohio and a statement of sympathy for vic-

tims of a school shooting in Colorado, President Trump last week found time to tweet about an obscure House bill that would assure a Massachusetts Indian tribe control of 321 acres of land it wants to use for a gambling casino.

The president was against the bill, he wrote, because it was "unfair and doesn't treat Native Americans equally!"

Presidents don't usually get involved in local tiffs over a planned 900-room casino hotel. And even though this president has a four-decade-long record of slamming American Indian casinos as scams that pose unfair competition to other gambling enterprises, notably his own, Trump's decision to weigh in on a measure that had strong bipartisan support seemed unusual for a chief executive who doesn't like to be bothered with the little stuff.

But a closer look at House Bill 312 and the favor it would do for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe reveals a sprawling network of Trump-related interests, from the National Enquirer to a Rhode Island casino company—a small but strikingly intricate example of the ways this president's business dealings, personal bonds and political alliances can complicate and color the ordinary doings of government.

On the surface, the matter is a simple dispute over who wants a casino and who doesn't. The Mashpee Tribe seeks to build a casino in southeastern Massachusetts. If the federal government decreed the land to be the tribe's sovereign property, the casino would be exempt from many taxes.

But some residents of the town where the casino would be built sued over the project, and after the tribe broke ground, a federal judge sided with the residents, ruling that, because of the history of that parcel of land, the feds didn't have the authority to guarantee it to the tribe.

So far, no Trump connection. But the tribe's site is about 18 miles from Rhode Island, and that state's politicians aren't keen to have a new competitor go up against their two casinos, both of which are run by Twin River Worldwide Holdings, a public company with strong Trump ties.

Twin River's president, George Papanier, was a finance executive at the Trump Plaza casino hotel in Atlantic City earlier in his career, and Twin River's chief marketing officer, Phil Juliano, also lists experience at a Trump casino on his résumé.

For decades, Trump, whose Atlantic City casinos were his first big venture outside New York—they became some of his biggest failures when they suffered bankruptcies in the early 1990s—has spoken of casinos built by Indian tribes as fraudulent ventures: "the biggest scandal ever," he said.

In 1993, concerned about competition from the Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut, Trump urged a House committee on native affairs to investigate whether members of the tribe that operates that resort were really Native Americans.

"They don't look like Indians to me," Trump said. In an earlier interview, he opined that "I might have more Indian blood than a lot of the so-called Indians that are trying to open up the reservations" to gambling.

In 2000, when New York state considered expanding Indian casinos in the Catskill Mountains north of New York City, Trump, working through his longtime ally Roger Stone, funded a group that paid for TV and print ads accusing prominent members of the Mohawk Indian tribe of having mob connections and criminal records. Trump and Stone failed to report their spending on the ads as lobbying, as the state required, and state regulators imposed their largest-ever civil penalty, \$250,000, on Trump, who was forced to issue a public apology.

But Trump has not always opposed Indian casinos. In 1997, he cut a deal with another Connecticut tribe, the Paucatuck Indians, who agreed to pay him a management fee in exchange for his efforts to win the tribe the federal recognition it needed to open a casino.

In the Mashpee case, Twin River, the operator of the two Rhode Island casinos, has hired Matthew Schlapp, chairman of the American Conservative Union and a vocal Trump supporter, to lobby for it on the land issue. Schlapp's wife, Mercedes, is director of strategic communications at the White House.

Matthew Schlapp said last week that his wife played "no role in my advocacy" and that he lobbied against the casino because it was a "terrible idea."

The lobbyist apparently focused Trump's attention on the casino bill by connecting it to Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), who is seeking her party's presidential nomination and has been for years a favorite target of Trump's because of her since-retracted claim to be Native American. But there is no Senate version of the House bill, which the House is scheduled to vote on this week, and Warren has made no statement on the casino project.

Twin River has paid Schlapp's company, Cove Strategies, \$30,000 this year, according to federal records. Another lobbyist, Black Diamond Strategies, also got \$30,000 from the casino firm to work on the Mashpee case, records show. One of Black Diamond's lobbyists working for Twin River, Doug Davenport, was a delegate strategist for Trump's 2016 campaign and formerly worked for ex-Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort's lobbying company, where he handled public affairs for clients including Trump.

As a candidate, Trump repeatedly promised to "drain the swamp," describing Washington as a den of elite thieves—politicians, lawyers, lobbyists, domineering corporations—whose interlocking interests were more powerful than any political party or ideological allegiance.

But as president, Trump has embraced the very structures he railed against in the 2016 campaign, for example picking more than 350 former lobbyists to serve in his administration, most in agencies that they used to lobby.

Spokesmen for the White House and Twin River did not respond to requests for comment.

The intersections between Trump and entities involved with Twin River can be complex.

Among Twin River's major investors is a \$4 billion New Jersey-based hedge fund called Chatham Asset Management and its founder, Anthony Melchiorre, according to SEC records. Chatham also owned about 80 percent of American Media Inc., the publisher of the National Enquirer, the supermarket tabloid that took payments from Trump's longtime lawyer and fixer, Michael Cohen, to make certain that no stories were published about two women's allegations that they had affairs with Trump.

A spokesman for Chatham declined to speak on the record about Twin River's involvement in the Mashpee Indian matter, but Chatham and Twin River have been embroiled in a lawsuit in Delaware, where Chatham accused top executives at the casino company of self-dealing and "placing their personal financial interests above those of Twin River's stockholders." Twin River has denied the allegations.

David Pecker, American Media's chief executive and a longtime ally of Trump's, has said that Chatham saved his company from financial collapse. Pecker last fall signed an agreement to cooperate with federal prosecutors in New York who were investigating the